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November 16, 2011

Future Fisheries
C/O Mark Lere
Fisheries Division
MT FWP
1420 East Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59620

**RE: Letter of Support For Willow Creek Project Proposal – Big Blackfoot
Chapter of Trout Unlimited**

Dear Future Fisheries Division,

On behalf of Five Valleys Land Trust, I am writing to express our support for the Willow Creek Project Proposal. This project will enhance fish passage on a portion of Willow Creek that is on the Biresch Conservation Easement that we oversee. We also support the other watershed improvements that are slated for Willow Creek. These improvements are vital for the continued top-down movement of the westslope cutthroat trout population.

Specific to our conservation easement, the culvert that currently exists on the Biresch place is undersized and inadequate for fish passage. This culvert threatens to blow out nearly every spring. A neighboring ranch manager helped the Bireschs keep the culvert intact until the spring runoff passed. The proposed culvert enhancement would permanently fix this issue.

As an easement holder, Five Valleys is proud to be a partner in the collaborative effort that is taking shape to improve the fisheries of Willow Creek. Please consider funding this project so that this forward momentum is sustained.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ryan Chapin".

Ryan Chapin
Stewardship Manager



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